

erved, from the published reports of the debates, that the discussion, in both branches of the Legislature, scarcely touched the *principle* of the bill, but dwelt upon the *details*—that it was mainly confined to the first eleven clauses, which provide for the submission of the bill to the people, and define the mode in which the vote of the people was to have been taken.

A number of the members of both houses are of opinion that the principle of submitting the bill to the people for ratification is “unjust, unprecedented, and contrary to the spirit and genius of the British Constitution.” They argue that it is unconstitutional to grant to the people powers which, if exercised at all, ought only to be exercised by the Legislature,—that if a prohibitory law is sought, on the ground that it would diminish crime and pauperism, and make life and property more secure, it is surely the province of the Legislature to determine *whether the premises are proved*. But what are the premises? They are these: that intemperance is the prolific cause of pauperism, crime, domestic misery, heart-rending sorrow, cursing, swearing, premature death, and woes innumerable to the Church and the world; and more than this: that there is in this country a licensed trade, protected by the law of the land, which is productive of a thousand-fold more mischief, misery, disease, and death, than any other trade known to the civilized world. Has not the Legislature admitted these premises already? *The conviction of the insufficiency of the license system, as a remedial measure, has forced itself upon the Legislature year after year; and hence the constant return of legislation to the subject.* The people of this province have long since found that the license system is a *cheat*,—that it promises to *diminish* the evils of intemperance, but *produces* them,—that it promises *revenue*, but increases *taxes* and burdens,—that it promises to *lessen* the sale of intoxicating liquors, but *concentrates* it. They have year after year asked for a remedy which will be final and absolute, but in vain. The objection to it has been, it will be distasteful to the people, and therefore impracticable.” The people now ask for an opportunity to give a direct expression of their wish. If such a measure will best accomplish the ends of good government, who shall oppose it? If the Legislature choose to waive for the occasion their *right* to pass the law unconditionally, they have the power, and